

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

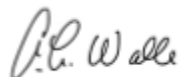
LSG Floor Report For Constitutional Amendments Calendar – Friday, November 17, 2023

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| <p>HJR 1</p> <p>By: King, Ken Bell, Keith VanDeaver</p> | <p>Proposing a constitutional amendment creating the state school safety fund to provide ongoing financial support for projects that ensure the safety of public schools in this state and providing for the transfer of certain general revenues to that fund, the economic stabilization fund, and the state highway fund.</p> | <p>Educational Opportunity & Enrichment, Select</p> <p>14 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p> | <p>HJR 1 amends the Texas Constitution to create the State School Safety Fund (SSSF) to provide ongoing financial support for public school safety projects, subject to legislation. The SSSF would fund the grants created by HB 2, 88(4).</p> <p>The SSSF would be funded by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • money appropriated to the fund, • money transferred or deposited to the fund, including transfers from the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF) and excess Foundation School Program funding, • revenue from any source as determined by the legislature, • investment earnings and interest, and • surplus funds from funds appropriated for the support and maintenance of public schools <p>Currently, the ESF, also known as the Rainy Day Fund, receives one-half of 75 percent of the state’s severance taxes (oil and natural gas production tax revenues) in any fiscal year that exceeds 1987 collections. HJR 1 would decrease the severance tax share going to the ESF by up to \$1.1 billion and instead allocate the funds to the SSSF starting in Fiscal Year 2024.</p> <p>Concerns Because one funds the other, the concerns with HJR 1 mirror the concerns with HB 2. At the same time, HJR 1 simply creates a holding place for funds; it’s the Legislature that decides what to do with it – for better or for worse.</p> | <p><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></p> |
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LSG Floor Report For General State Calendar – Friday, November 17, 2023

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| <p>HB 2</p> <p>By: King, Ken Buckley Ashby Dutton</p> | <p>Relating to measures for ensuring safety and security in public schools, including the establishment of a school safety grant program and a school safety plan implementation grant</p> | <p>Educational Opportunity & Enrichment, Select</p> <p>14 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p> | <p>Many school districts have struggled to come up with the money and personnel to comply with HB 3, 88(R), which requires one armed officer on every school campus and new campus safety standards. HB 3 granted school districts an additional \$15,000 per campus and increased the school safety allotment by \$0.28 to \$10 per student. Even then, districts say it's not enough. The intent of HB 2 is to help with these mandates going forward and similar initiatives.</p> <p>HB 2 repeals the \$10 per student ADA school safety allotment and creates two grant programs funded by the State School Safety Fund (SSSF), contingent on enactment and voter approval of HJR 1:</p> | <p><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></p> |
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| | <p>program, and the allocation of certain constitutional transfers of money to the state school safety fund, the economic stabilization fund, and the state highway fund.</p> | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Safety Grant — enrollment-based funding per student plus an additional amount depending on district or campus size, capped \$1.1 billion per year statewide, to improve school safety and security, including costs associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improvements to school infrastructure such as fencing, door and window security updates, security cameras, panic buttons ○ Employing peace officers, private security officers, school marshalls, active shooter emergency response training, providing mental health services, support from chaplains, training for persons authorized to carry a firearm on campus 2. School Safety Plan Implementation Grant — for reimbursements to districts and charters for implementing a school safety plan required by statute not to exceed \$250 million in total per year and limited to \$10 million per school district or charter school. <p>HB 2 author Rep. Ken King stated that HB 2 would not decrease any funds going towards the State Highway Fund (SHF).</p> <p>Concerns Because of House leadership’s refusal to enact common-sense gun legislation, our schools are having to pay for unfunded, band-aid solutions like HB 3, 88(R). Schools and advocates had already raised the alarm that the requirements under HB 3 were beyond what their budgets could afford.</p> <p>LSG did not support HB 3 during the regular session. While there are some useful provisions, such as more rigorous building standards and mental health training, it also requires more policing and guns in schools. More guns in schools don’t make schools safer. Increased police presence in schools has proven to result in further criminalization of our most marginalized students. Furthermore, the presence of armed police during these incidents of mass violence may not lead to fewer casualties; the Uvalde school shooting had 376 law enforcement on the scene.</p> <p>At the same time, the regular session’s HB 3 states that if schools want to claim a good cause exemption for the one-officer-per-school requirement due to lacking funds or qualified personnel, they must develop an alternative plan, which may include a school marshall or school employee who has completed training and carries a handgun on campus. In this way, HB 2 could help prevent schools from having a school teacher, counselor, or other staff acting as the school officer.</p> | |
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